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EDITORIAL

Lectures. The course of weekly Biblical lectures announced in the July number of *SCRIPTURE* will start at the Newman Centre, Portman Square, London, W.1, on Friday, 26th September at 6.30 p.m. The course is entitled *The Background of Bible Study* and covers a wide range of subjects, theological, historical and critical. Members of the Catholic Biblical Association are entitled to the same reduction as members of the Newman Association. Application should be made to the Registrar, Newman Association, 31 Portman Square, W.1. We hope that as many as possible will attend the course. It may be well once more to say that the course is not designed for specialists, but for the ordinary person with some education and a little time for study. As is implied above, the course is open to those who are not members of either Association.

Annual General Meeting. This will take place as usual at the Newman Centre, 31 Portman Square, London, W.1. The date is Thursday, 1st January at 6 p.m. The business meeting will be followed by a paper on a Biblical subject. Annual General Meetings are often rather dull experiences but are none the less important for that, and the number present has an important bearing on the future conduct of the association. We trust that many will find it possible to attend it, as well as the lecture.

New Periodicals. The Biblical student finds it progressively harder to keep up with the ever-increasing spate of periodicals. It is therefore with relief and great expectation that we welcome the appearance of the 'International Review of Biblical Studies', or to give it its German title, *Zeitschriftenschau für Bibelwissenschaft und Grenzgebiete*. It is a publication of the Katholisches Bibelwerk Stuttgart in collaboration with the University of Tübingen—and it includes work by both Catholic and Protestant faculties at that university. The periodical is to appear twice yearly and aims at covering all the reviews on Biblical and allied subjects. This first issue lists no less than 393 periodicals. The articles are referred to under subject headings—first, author's name, then title of article, then reference to the review in which it appears. Any article which

seems to justify a brief summary is given such summary. Actually, the majority of the articles are given at least a few lines of description. Naturally the usefulness of this Review will depend to some extent on the time-lag between the appearance of the periodicals and the appearance of the Review. This first number while not professing to be absolutely comprehensive is on the other hand up-to-date, i.e. up to the end of 1951. The Review may well come to be an indispensable part of the Biblical student's library.

Also recently published is the 'Theology Digest' from St Mary's College, Kansas, the Divinity School of St Louis University. Though somewhat different in scope and plan from the above German periodical, nevertheless its appearance is once more due to the need to present the enormous amount of material published in a handy and easily available form. In this Digest of course we have summaries consisting of two or three pages each. But they are not merely summaries; they are often made from articles in other languages. The selection of articles is judiciously made, not only with a view to publishing what is more important but also aiming at a central theme in each issue. The Digest is still in the experimental stage but this first issue is certainly promising.

Reprint. In response to requests we reprint in this issue an article 'The Approach to the Old Testament' by Fr Hugh McKay, O.F.M. This originally appeared in the occasional leaflet we published before we started the quarterly SCRIPTURE in January 1946.

Obituary. We record with regret the death of Sir Frederic Kenyon, the well-known Biblical scholar. An appreciation will be published in the next issue of SCRIPTURE.

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

WHEN we inquire into the origin and meaning of the ark we find that it plays a two-fold role: it is the place where Yahweh is in a special way present among the Israelites; and it is the box in which are kept the two tables of the law. The connection between these two ideas is not obvious; in fact one might wonder whether there is any connection, apart from the name. Have we here an example of two completely separate traditions, linked together later by the compilers of the Pentateuch in its present form? There are solid grounds for this suspicion when we find that the first idea is derived from the sources E and J, while the latter is found in the sources D and P. Even the name is not identical in each of these traditions; as the place where

Yahweh dwells, the ark is called 'ark of Yahweh'; as the resting place for the tables of the law it is known as 'the ark of the covenant'. In the P source it is given a third name: 'the ark of the testimony'. The compilers of the Pentateuch attempted to link up these two traditions, by changing the first name into the second. This they did by inserting *berith* (covenant) between the words 'ark' and 'Yahweh'. It is clearly the work of later editors: there is frequent discrepancy between the Massoretic Text and the Septuagint. In the Books of Samuel for instance, there is only one example: II Sam. xv, 24, where the M.T. and LXX are in agreement; and in the Massoretic Text, the result of the insertion frequently gives us the grammatically intolerable phenomenon of a noun in the construct case carrying the article.¹ The question to be solved, therefore, is whether there were originally two quite different traditions concerning the ark, or whether it was always regarded in the same light throughout the history of Israel.

The ark plays a most important part in the early history of the chosen people. It goes ahead of them as they make their way through the desert: it leads them like a general at the head of his army: 'And they departed from the mount of Yahweh, three days' journey; and the ark of the covenant of Yahweh went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them . . . And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said: Rise up, Yahweh, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee. And when it rested he said: Return, Yahweh, unto the many thousands of Israel' (Num. x, 33-6). The ark continues to play its part as their leader, and in a wonderful manner, when they reach the confines of Canaan (Jos. iii, 3). It is the ark which provides a passage for them across the Jordan: 'As they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water . . . the waters which came down from above stood . . . and those that came down towards the sea of the plain, the salt sea, failed and were cut off; and the people passed over. And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of Yahweh stood firm on dry land in the midst of the Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground' (Jos. iii, 15-17). The dividing of the waters is attributed to the ark: the author is at pains to

¹ Some have tried to explain the phenomenon as an elliptical expression (c.f. Hummelauer: *Comm. in Jos.*, C.S.S., 1903, and Steuernagel: *Josue*: Goettingen 1923: both ad Jos. iii, 11), but examples of ellipsis are not certainly found. In other cases where the construct case would appear to have the article, we find that the word which it governs is the name of a place, and these examples are better explained as a noun in the absolute, followed by an 'accusativus loci'. Cf. BURNES: *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings*: Oxford 1903 ad II Kings xxiii, 17; DRIVER: *Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel*: 2nd edit. Oxford 1913: ad II Sam. ii, 32; SANDA: *Die Bücher der Könige*: Münster 1912 ad II Kings xxiii, 17.

emphasize it: 'And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of Yahweh were come up out of the midst of Jordan . . . that the waters of Jordan returned to their place, and flowed over all its banks as before' (Jos. iv, 18). But the ark is more than a mere pathfinder; it is their general, that brings about the capture of the strong city of Jericho. It is the ark which plays the chief part: the procession of priests and soldiers is only its entourage: 'Seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horn, passed on before Yahweh, and blew with the trumpets; and the ark of the covenant of Yahweh followed them. And the armed men went before the priests that blew the trumpets, and the rearward came after the ark' (Jos. vi, 8-9). The ark is clearly the thing that matters most: 'So the ark of Yahweh compassed the city, going about it once' (Jos. vi, 11). On the seventh day the walls fell and the city was captured: Josue had already told the people: 'Yahweh hath given you the city' (Jos. vi, 16). Israel's troubles were by no means over, when they had gained a foothold in Canaan. The Philistines were their bitter enemies, and in I Sam. chaps iv—vi we have an account of the battles against them. Here again, we see what an important part the ark played in Israel's war-like activities. When the Israelites venture forth against them without the ark, they are defeated, and they quickly suspect the reason why: the ark was absent: 'And when the people were come into the camp the elders of Israel said: Wherefore hath Yahweh smitten us to-day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of Yahweh out of Silo unto us, that when He cometh among us, He may save us out of the hand of our enemies.' (I Sam. vi, 3.)² The capture of the ark by the Philistines was the greatest of calamities; Eli died at hearing the news (I Sam. vi, 18).

The ark therefore, was intimately concerned in the wanderings and wars of Israel: in some way or other it seemed to play the part of a general, at the head of his army; when Israel went to war, the ark went with them; its presence was the essential condition for success. What, then did the ark mean to the Israelites? How could they think of the ark as their leader and general, as the thing which made all the difference between victory and defeat? Obviously it must have meant more to them than the mere material thing they had made. From the texts quoted it is clear that where the ark is, there is Yahweh also; Yahweh is in some special way connected with the ark. He is as it were localized in or on or around the ark. If we re-read, for instance, Moses' utterance as the Israelites set forth from Sinai (Num. x, 35-36) we see that Yahweh and the ark are in some way identified: when the ark is raised up, it is Yahweh who rises up; when the ark is set down in the camp, it is Yahweh who returns to take His place among them. We have seen how the miraculous

² *HE*, not 'it', for 'ark' is feminine cf. SMITH: *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Samuel*: I.C.C. 1904 ad h.v.

crossing of the Jordan was attributed to the presence of the ark ; it is alternatively attributed to the presence of Yahweh (Jos. iii, 5 ; iii, 10-11). The ark was held in the middle of the Jordan, and the people crossed in the sight of the ark. Is not the same thing meant when we are told quite simply that 'About four thousand warriors crossed in the sight of Yahweh?' (Jos. iv, 13). 'Before the ark of Yahweh' and 'Before Yahweh' are likewise synonymous expressions in the account of the capture of Jericho (Jos. vi, 6 ; vi, 18). Neglecting the ark, the Israelites are defeated by the Philistines, for they are neglecting Yahweh Himself (I Sam. vi, 3). Even the pagan and hostile Philistines understand the significance of the ark to the Israelites ; its arrival causes consternation : 'God is come into the camp. Woe unto us ! Who shall deliver us from the hand of this mighty God ? This is the God that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness' (I Sam. vi, 7-8). When the ark was kept twenty years at Kirjath-jearim 'All the house of Israel lamented after Yahweh' (I Sam. vii, 2), for when the ark was absent, was not Yahweh absent ? Finally, this association of Yahweh and the ark is sanctioned by God Himself. When David, disturbed because the ark is not housed as becomes its dignity says : 'See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains' (II Sam. vii, 2), the prophet Nathan brings him the message of Yahweh : 'Shalt thou build ME a house for me to dwell in ? Whereas I have not dwelt in a house since the time I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have journeyed in a tent and in a tabernacle' (II Sam. vii, 5-8). The ark, therefore, stands in so close an association with Yahweh that it is wellnigh identified with Him. Yahweh is their leader ; Yahweh is their general bringing them victory in war ; and He is brought into their midst by means of the ark.

According to the second tradition, which is equally clearly witnessed in the Old Testament, the ark is the box in which are kept the two tables of the law, and it is to this tradition that the common name 'ark of the covenant' more directly applies. 'At that time Yahweh said unto me : Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto Me to the mountain ; and make thee an ark of wood. And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest ; and thou shalt put them in the ark . . . And I made an ark of sittim wood . . . and put the tables in the ark which I had made ; and there they are, as Yahweh commanded me' (Deut. x, 1, 3, 5). The ark was made by Moses, at Yahweh's command, to serve as a container for the two stone tablets which Yahweh gave to him. That purpose is still served when Solomon installed the ark in his magnificent temple : we are told that : 'There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone' (I Kings viii, 9). But what were these two tables of stone ? Since the ark was made for their sake, we must investigate their significance. When the Israelites

left Egypt, they came to Mount Sinai; and there Yahweh manifested Himself to them, and offered to take the Israelites under His special protection: 'Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all peoples' (Ex. xix, 5.) Yahweh is proposing to make a covenant, a pact with Israel: He will be their God, they shall be His people in a special manner. It is almost, as the prophets were later to describe it, a proposal of marriage. Yahweh offers the Israelites a contract; will they sign it? 'And all the people answered together and said: All that Yahweh hath spoken we will do' (Ex. xix, 8). What were they undertaking? What was their part in the contract? 'If you will obey my voice', Yahweh had said; this contract, on the part of the Israelites, was to consist in keeping the law of Yahweh. This law, Yahweh communicated to Moses; and to make it a more forceful reminder he epitomises it in the decalogue which he engraves upon two tablets of stone. These represent Israel's part of that bi-lateral agreement they had entered upon with Yahweh. The tables of stone are the receipt, testifying that Israel had made a pact, a covenant with Yahweh. The ark becomes the sacred guardian of the pledge which Israel gave to Yahweh; it is the box which contains the covenant, the covenant which shapes the destiny of Israel. In the ancient East, where no pact was considered valid unless it were put in writing,³ a covenant without a document testifying to it, was impossible. Moreover, such documents were kept in caskets of wood or clay; the archives of the king of Ta'annak, for instance, were found preserved on clay tablets, in a clay casket.⁴

The historicity of this tradition, whereby the placing of the tables of the law in the ark is attributed to Moses, has been denied by many. Preserved as it is in the later sources D and P it is considered to be a retrojection of the later 'covenant idea' into more primitive times, in order that it might seem to have its roots in the ancient history of Israel. But one of the master-ideas of Israel's faith, not only in mosaic times, but even in the patriarchal period, is the 'election-motif': Israel is the chosen people of God. The whole history of Israel is shaped by this idea. From the very day when Abram left Harran at the command of God, Yahweh promised him a posterity as numerous as the stars of heaven (Gen. xv, 5), and in answer to Abram's question: 'Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?' 'Yahweh made a covenant with Abram' (Gen. xv, 18). In other words, the covenant is

³ The importance of the bond or written document witnessing to a contract is seen from the Code of Hammurapi; cf. for instance, the necessity of bonds for a legal marriage: 'If a man has married a wife and has not laid down her bonds, that woman is no wife', no. 128.

⁴ SELLIN: *Tell Ta'annak* (Denkschriften der Kais. Akad. d. Wiss. in Wien; phil.-hist. Kl. Bd. L.) 4 Wien 1904 s.41.

the direct outcome of the election of Israel by Yahweh. If this election by God is at the heart of the Israelite religion, if the promise of a land and numerous posterity is founded on patriarchal tradition, then the covenant idea must be equally primitive in its origin, for it is directly connected as the guarantee is to the promise. There is, therefore, every reason for accepting the historicity of a written covenant in the time of Moses. Considering the insistence, among ancient peoples of the east, upon the value of written documents in witness to all pacts, it is hardly conceivable that such a pact as this, between Yahweh and Israel, a pact which shaped the whole course of their history, should not be set down in writing. Nor is it difficult to understand why this should take place at the moment when Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt. On the eve of their entering into that promised land, which was a part of their election (Gen. xv, 18) Yahweh, as it were, hands to them the title-deeds. Hence there is no valid reason, for rejecting the historicity of those texts quoted above, wherein the placing of the tables of the law in the ark is attributed to Moses.

The Old Testament therefore, gives us two traditions concerning the ark : according to the first, transmitted by the sources E and J, the ark was the place of Yahweh's presence among His people ; according to the second, transmitted by the sources D and P, it was the casket in which were contained the tablets of the law of the covenant. The existence of these two different traditions, is, I think, quite certain. But it is not so clear, whether the difference lies in two quite separate ideas, or whether it is merely a difference of emphasis. In other words, was the ark at all times throughout the history of Israel both the place of Yahweh's presence and the container of the tables of the law ; or was it originally only the first ? Many have seen in these two traditions a clear proof of the evolution of the Israelite religion from primitive nomad beliefs to the highly organized sacerdotal ritualism of post-exilic times. In the beginning, they say, the ark was merely a battle standard, something which invoked the aid of that war god Yahweh who thundered forth in fire and smoke from the summit of Mount Sinai. It was the palladium which brought good luck. Hence it was invested with a sacred character and became the centre of their worship. Possibly it contained sacred stones in which spirits and divinities were thought to dwell ; they might be oracle stones or meteor stones since Yahweh would seem to have been originally the storm god. After the Israelites had settled down to a stable life, and with the appearance of the prophets, this crude conception was purified, and the sacred stones were changed into the stone tablets of the law ; and with the growth of ritualism during the exile, and the increasing importance of the priestly caste, the ark is made to appear as the most important article of the temple furniture, an object of elaborate craftsmanship, the smallest details of which are regulated by law. There is

however, no evidence of such an evolution; the whole theory depends on the assertion that primitive Israelite religion was pure Nomadism. But archæological evidence, especially the knowledge gained through the Amarna and Boghazkoi texts, makes such a theory untenable. It is too primitive even for primitive Israel.⁵

Such an evolutionary explanation is far too drastic to be borne out by facts. But it would be surprising if there were not signs of a certain measure of development in the long history of Israel. In fact this development did take place: the ark was considered in earlier times, mainly as the place of Yahweh's presence among His people, whilst later on, it was regarded mainly as the casket containing the covenant. But the change was a change of emphasis only; the two traditions are not wholly distinct for each contains traces of the other. Thus in the first tradition, the very name 'ark' leads us to suspect that it was designed to contain something, for the word '*aron*' means 'box' or 'casket',⁶ and is never used in a transferred sense for anything else. It is true that we find no explicit reference in the sources on which this tradition depends, to the things which this casket contains; but this earlier tradition also, recounts that Yahweh made a covenant with Israel, and wrote down His law on tables of stone (Ex. xix, 5; xxiv, 12). If we are not told that these tables were placed in the ark, neither are we told that they were kept anywhere else, nor are we told that anything else was placed in the ark. We have seen that valuable documents were regularly kept in wooden or clay caskets. It seems a reasonable inference that even in the earlier tradition the ark was also the casket for the tables of the law. It is more obvious that in the second tradition where the ark is considered chiefly as the casket for the law, it was also regarded as the place where Yahweh was present in a special manner. In Exodus chap. xxv, where the detailed description of the ark is given, we also read of Yahweh's promise to be present: 'And in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will be known to thee, and speak to thee from upon the *kapporeth*, from the midst of the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony' (Ex. xxv, 22). The tabernacle, erected to house the ark, is likewise the place where Yahweh is to be found (Ex. xxx, 31; Num. xvii, 9), and the same idea is expressed in the phrase, considered of late origin: 'Ark of Yahweh God, sitting between the Cherubim' (I Sam. iv, 4). The two traditions, therefore, reflect not two distinct ideas, but a change of emphasis. This change of emphasis came as a result of the religious revival of the eighth and seventh centuries which took the form of a call to Israel to be faithful once more to her agreement with Yahweh. We have seen that the election

⁵ Cf. DURR: *Ursprung u. Bedeutung der Bundeslade*: Bonner Seitschrif f. Theologie u. Seelsorg: I (1924) s.19.

⁶ Cf. Gen. I, 26; II Kings xii, 10, 11; II Chron. xxiv, 8, 10, 11.

of Israel was at the very heart of their religion, and the instrument of that election was the Sinaitic covenant, the alliance between God and His people. But Israel's contact with pagan Canaan; the evils resulting from a more highly-organized social life under David and Solomon; the schism between north and south: all were factors in the weakening of Israel's faith, in the decline of her fervour. Hence the prophets described Israel as an unfaithful spouse; she had committed adultery with pagan gods, deserting her legitimate spouse, Yahweh. The whole concept of Israel's wickedness and of Israel's conversion, is represented in terms of that covenant with Yahweh. The emphasis placed upon the covenant, the revival of its memory, would naturally extend to the visible token of that covenant: the tables of the law kept in the ark. Here lies the explanation of why the title 'ark of the covenant' prevailed, and why, when in the sources of the earlier tradition the simple title 'ark of Yahweh' was found, the word *berith* (covenant) was deliberately inserted. It served as yet another reminder to the people, that they were bound by the laws and promises of fidelity they had accepted when they made a covenant with Yahweh.

Finally, in confirmation of our conclusion that the ark was both the throne of Yahweh and the casket containing the covenant, let us briefly consider some of the analogies to the ark, found among surrounding peoples. The Israelites during their sojourn in Egypt must have become familiar with the sight of the sacred barge, carried in procession by means of its long poles; and certain details in the ark's construction were doubtless borrowed from it. But a closer analogy to the ark as the throne of Yahweh, is found in the empty throne of the god, described by Persian and Greek writers, first set up in permanent fashion, later carried from place to place. In later times with reference to both Cyrus and Xerxes we read that in the midst of the grand state procession, there was an empty chariot drawn by white horses, and this was sacred to Jupiter.⁷ The practice of keeping documents near the throne of the god was also quite common. It is well known that important documents were always preserved in temples. They were kept, as we now know from archæological discoveries in Egypt, Babylon, Boghazkoi and Syria, in a casket at the feet of the divinity. Thus we read, for instance, in a note appended to the sixty-fourth chapter of the Book of the Dead: 'This chapter was discovered at Hermopolis, upon a slab of alabaster, inscribed in blue, under the feet of this god, at the time of King Menkara.'⁸ A note to a remedy found in a papyrus of the time of Ramses II reads: 'Found among old writings in a casket with book-rolls, under the feet

⁷ Cf. XENOPHON: *Cyropaedia*: VIII, 3, 9ff. HERODOTUS: VII: 40.

⁸ Cf. *The Life Work of Sir Peter Le Page Renouf*: Vol. IV: The Book of the Dead: translation and commentary, continued and completed by Prof. E. Naville: 1907.

of Anubis at Leontopolis.⁹ In a Babylonian document the king invites the recipient of the inscribed cylinder he is forwarding, to 'Deposit it in the temple, the fitting place for it.'¹⁰ The stele inscribed with the Code of Hammurapi stood in the temple. This custom of depositing documents 'at the feet of the gods' was especially strong among the Hittites. Thus we read at the end of a treaty between Subbiluliuma and the king of Mitanni: 'A copy of the tablet is to be deposited before the sun-god of the town of Arinna'.¹¹ and in a letter of the Egyptian pharaoh, a son of Ramses II, to the king of Mira, we are especially reminded of the Israelite covenant: 'Here is the document of the oath, which I have had prepared for the great king of Chatti, my brother; it has been deposited at the feet of the god Tesup, before the divinity. *This is to be a witness.*' ('*eduth!*').¹² In discussing the ark, we have avoided any consideration of the *kapporeth*. If, however, there are solid grounds for considering the *kapporeth* as the actual throne of Yahweh,¹³ and the ark—the casket—as His footstool, then the above analogies are even closer. But in any case, we have shown that the ark was at all times both the place of Yahweh's presence: His throne, and the casket in which the two tables of the law were contained. The two traditions simply reflect a different emphasis, and the origin of the ark must be sought where these two ideas are found together: at Mount Sinai, where Yahweh promised Moses that He would go before the Israelites and be with them, and where He made His pact, His covenant with Israel, giving them the tables of the law to witness to it.

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⁹ WRESZINSKI: *Der grosse medizinische Papyrus der Berliner Museum*: Leipzig: 1909: Kol. XV: 2xL. 1 u. 2.

¹⁰ CLAY: *New-Babylonian Letters from Erech*: 1919 no. 4.

¹¹ *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazkoi*: I Heft (1916) nr. 1, Rs. 35ff.

¹² JIRKU: *Altoriental Kommentar zum Alten Testament*: 1923: s.185.

¹³ DIBELIUS: *Die Lade Jahves*: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung: Forschungen z. Religion u. Litteratur des A. u. N.T. no. 7. 1906. s. 40.

THE APPROACH TO THE OLD TESTAMENT¹

BEFORE he died, Moses climbed a mountain range overlooking Canaan, and there the Lord showed him all the land. His eyes could turn to the eternal snows on the mountain peaks, or to the cornfields in the plains, to the Dead Sea at his feet, or to Jerusalem destined to capture the imagination of the world. Wherever they turned, they rested upon the inheritance promised by the Lord to Israel. *Haec sunt per allegoriam dicta !* They are a reminder that too many of us need the bird's-eye view of the rich landscape spread out before us in the pages of the Old Testament. Perhaps other more competent contributors will do the work of Josue and help us master the individual towns and strongholds. Here it will be enough to give a panoramic view, describing our general impressions and pointing out some vantage points from which to appreciate the significance and beauty of this vast inheritance of Israel.

If we wish to reduce the contents of the whole of the Old Testament to a single statement, we might say: the Old Testament is a collection of books recognized by the Church as inspired, made up of songs, prayers, history, proverbs and prophetic oracles, and expressed within the historical and religious framework of the ancient East. They are not the only literary products of Israel, for various Hebrew writings mentioned in the Bible have long since perished. Neither are they meant to be the complete account of the events they describe. For these books differ from secular writings, not only in that they have God for their Author, but also because they subordinate all other interests to the religious one. In the book of Ruth for example, a searchlight of divine publicity is focused upon a widowed Moabitess of no political importance. The reason is she is the ancestress of the Davidic dynasty to whom was promised the future Redeemer.

Perhaps the first general impression made on a cultured pagan by a first glance at the Old Testament would be one of bewilderment. He would find a mixture of early religious traditions, complex laws, sacred oracles and national history written in different styles and belonging to different epochs. His bewilderment would be artificially increased at finding this collection bound in one book and arranged out of chronological order, with little or no indication as to when history began and poetry ended. When due allowance is made, something of the same effect would be produced in us, if we were confronted with Cæsar's Gallic Wars, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the Code of Justinian, the *Meditations* of Cardinal Newman, and the fulminations of Savonarola, all

¹ See Editorial, p. 81

bound in one book and printed in dull monotonous uniformity. The Bible, as has been said so often, is not so much a book as a library. It is like Solomon's Temple, built by many hands, of materials drawn from all sorts of places, and taking centuries longer than any temple to grow into its present fullness and cohesion. Comparing it with other religious books, Matthew Arnold once remarked: 'The Koran was made, the Bible grew'.

Not only did the Bible itself grow, but this very growth was rooted in a rich background of history of thousands of years. Just how far back these roots are stretched, it is not easy to say. The work of Turville-Petre near the Sea of Galilee, the discoveries in the Carmel district of Miss Garrod, of Miss Gardner and Miss Bate at Bethlehem, and the excavations of Professor Garstang at Jericho have almost ceased to make 4000 B.C. prehistoric. Similar discoveries in Egypt and Babylon give us the back drop-curtain, as it were, for the stage on which the drama of Israel's destiny was played. But what a multi-coloured background it is!—the rise and fall of empires with Palestine as the shuttlecock between the great civilizations of Babylon and Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece and Rome. They are a constant reminder that Israel did not live and develop in a vacuum. Syria and Palestine constituted the single land-bridge between the earliest and greatest centres of civilization, the one Asiatic, the other Egyptian. For merchant, politician, or soldier, Palestine was of immense importance. Shalmaneser (in the days of Achab), Tiglath-Pileser (in the reign of Achaz), Alexander, Pompey, Napoleon, and General Allenby have all sought to master this strategic bridgehead. Thus there was a constant ebb and flow of culture, politics, and religious influences pressing in upon Israel which are reflected in the pages of the Old Testament.

This historical development has an important corollary. Unlike the New Testament dispensation, revelation in the Old was not complete and final. Things that are so obvious to us now, were not at all obvious to the early Hebrews. Time and time again the ABC of all religious teaching had to be drummed into the wayward minds of the Israelites. It took many of them centuries to grasp the plain fact that God is One and Holy, loving righteousness and hating iniquity. The picture of Moses, his face haloed by his communion with the Eternal, staring down the mountain at the camp-fires lit around the Golden Calf, and the broken Tables of the Law lying at his feet, is a vision of shattering disillusionment over the wilful heart of Israel. 'The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib, but Israel hath not known me, and my people hath not understood' was true as late as the time of Isaias. Those people who explain the peculiar history of Israel by saying that the Hebrews had a natural genius for spiritual religion, apart from revelation, need to read their Bibles again. The reaction against the Tyrian gods and their

debauched cultus under the driving force of Elias and Eliseus saved the nation from almost national apostasy. As far back as the time of the Judges two currents of religious tendencies began to flow, which were destined to continue throughout the whole of Israelite history. Sometimes they flowed side by side, at other times they mingled and divided—the one upheld the pure traditional religion of Moses, the other, yielding to the contagion of neighbouring heathen peoples and their own weakness, manifested a more or less debased monotheism. On the one side were souls for whom the religion of Yahweh was the heart of all existence, individual and national. For them that religion was the principle of all prosperity, the source of power and glory, the unique law whereby to judge the incidents of life and the events of history. On the other side were men like Saul, Achab, and Achaz who let themselves be guided by personal interest, for whom religion was but a means to a selfish end, and whose human intrigues hid from their eyes the ever acting hand of God. So it was only gradually from crude, half-savage beginnings and many a relapse that the mingled judgments and mercies of God cleansed the Hebrews' faith from superstition and illusion in preparation for the noble mission imposed on them from on high.

Another element of diversity, if not complexity, is to be found in the wide range of character studies which make the Old Testament so vividly human. At the back of my mind is a paradoxical list of characters who arouse my keenest interest. Adam (the man who was never born), Elias (the man who never died), Job (the man who cursed his birthday), Jonas (the man who sulked with God), David (the man after God's heart), Ruth (the woman who liked her mother-in-law), Jael (the woman who hit the nail on the head), and Respha (the woman who guarded corpses). There is a mine of spiritual experience in the lives of saints and sinners and humdrum folk as they pass before us in the Old Testament story. There are the deepest emotions and highest aspirations of which man is capable voiced in language that can never grow old. In the Psalter especially and in the prophets, the men who wrote the Old Testament knew what it was to have the

'Desperate tides of the whole world's great anguish

Forced through the channels of a single heart.'

Read *aloud* the passage describing David's grief for the death of his worthless son, Absalom (cfr. II Kings xviii). Listen to that cry echoing down the empty halls of his palace: 'My son Absalom, Absalom, my son! Would to God that I might die for thee, Absalom, Absalom my son, my son Absalom!' Or read again of that mother of sorrow in the Old Testament, Respha, Saul's widowed queen, as she stood beneath seven crucified bodies, once the sons of her dead husband (II Kings xxi). For four long months she never left that grisly spot. Night after night she had little sleep as the eyes of beasts of prey gleamed at her in the

darkness. By noonday, when the heavens were a sea of molten brass, there would be dark specks in the sky and vultures wheeled croaking hungrily over the hillside with only a half-demented woman to keep them at bay. Her utter devotion melted the wrath of the fierce men who had slain those sons. They took away their bones and buried them beside Saul and Jonathan, and there in the dust they lie to this day. Within those pages are the cries of penitence and rapture which men feel at their purest moments, and the voices of mighty hopes beckoning them on to the horizons of eternity. They are filled with birth, death, hunger and parting, labour, joy and goodness—very elemental things, it is true, but the very stuff of all human life.

There can be little doubt that the Bible is a complex book, but after reading it, a Greek student once wrote in his own quaint English: 'The gabs are many, but the ghost is one'. He was struggling to express an equally important truth. The individual books are like a long succession of melodies, each in itself fragmentary, but linked up and woven together into the harmonious unity of some vast oratorio. The basic theme from Genesis to the Apocalypse is Christ. After all, the revelation contained in the Bible is from the One Divine Source of all Truth, and though written at sundry times and in divers manners, is directed to One Person, Jesus Christ, the Heir of all things and of all ages. To do justice to that statement would demand a summary of the Biblical theology of the Old Testament. However, at the risk of being superficial, it might be as well to try and reduce the plan of the Old Testament to its simplest elements. We can divide it up under the headings of the People, the Kingdom, and the King. A more theological division into the teaching on Man (Anthropology), the teaching on God (Theology) and their mutual relation in the doctrine of Salvation (Soteriology) is sometimes adopted. This division, however, would be too abstract for our present purpose, and in the Bible we meet these subjects as concrete historical realities, not as abstractions.

(a) *The People*. The Old Testament tells how God revealed Himself to a chosen race. This people started as a single family which was shaped and moulded through the centuries into a nation. The purpose of this ethnographical selection and training which occupy so much of the historical books, was to create and prepare a channel through which salvation could come to all mankind. The title-deeds of that divine election committed to our First Parents and early patriarchs can be summed up in the one word—Covenant. This covenant was ratified in a special way with Abraham and Moses. It contains the root-ideas of a great deal of sacred history and prophecy. By it were expressed the character and conditions of the relationship between Yahweh and His chosen people. Hence for the Hebrew the Law of the Covenant was more than a legislative code, it was the revelation of the Almighty to His

elect, a reflection of the Divine Mind ; and submission to it was the greatest act of adoration of which man was capable. All events and persons in the Old Testament are weighed and measured by their relation to the plan of that redeeming covenant. The book of Genesis, for example, covers the course of events from creation to the death of Joseph. It does so by an arrangement which may be compared to a series of narrowing concentric circles. It sketches in outline the story of how Israel became the bearer of revelation through the election of divine grace. In its genealogical tables those offshoots are dealt with first which were not destined to become bearers of that vocation. They are summarily dismissed in a few words, and the narrative proceeds to concentrate on Abraham and his descendants. Between the giant cities of Babylonia and Egypt we see the shadow of a pilgrim shepherd, and when they are crumbling into dust, his name will still be a blessing and a prophecy, for his adventurous faith is among the things that have changed the history of the world.

To be the vehicle of divine revelation to mankind was a tremendous vocation for Israel. Like many another divine choice it created its own problems and brought with it the possibility of tragedy. It did not destroy human freedom, and man's very intimacy with God carried with it the danger of His jealous anger. Men who jeopardized the fulfilment of God's supreme purpose by lack of faith, worldliness or sensuality were accursed by God, for they were rejecting the very love of God. 'With many of them God was not well pleased' and their bleached bones lay white in the wilderness. Yet the many instances of man's perversity which we find in the story of God's choice and man's response, do not lessen the value or interest of the narrative. On the contrary, these very failures brought out deeper revelations and compassion from the heart of God. In and through the amazing love of the prophet Osee for his degraded wife, we read a new meaning in the history of the chosen people. Israel was betrothed to God in the wilderness and married to Him in the covenant of Sinai, but oftentimes she proved herself shameless and unfaithful to the God who had wooed and won her heart. Yet adulteress and harlot though she was, the love of God pursued her still. It was a love not disillusioned by its failure to redeem, nor repulsed by the treachery with which its advances were met, but which persisted when failure seemed final and hopeless—a love comparable with that which the New Testament declares to be the nature of God.

(b) *The Kingdom.* To be the God of the chosen people implied more than that Yahweh would be a national God. It meant that Yahweh would reveal Himself to His people as the Living God in the fullness of His power and the riches of His grace. He bound Himself to protect the nation by His almighty arm, to instruct it in His laws, and guide the complete organization of civil and religious life by His wisdom. In a

word, as Supreme Judge, Administrator, and Ruler of the life of the nation, Yahweh was King of Israel, and Israel was His Kingdom—a holy nation, a kingdom of priests (Ex. xix, 5). It reconstituted that moral kingdom of God's rule over man which the rebellion of Adam had disrupted. In varying imperfect forms it struck root again in the story of the patriarchs, judges, and kings. After the transitional period of the judges the institution of human kingship seemed to threaten the framework of the theocracy, but the necessary readjustment came with the realization that the old theocracy was still at work under a new guise. The human king was Yahweh's deputy, king by God's grace and in some measure in God's stead; not as a rival, but intended to be the reflection of God's sovereignty in visible form. As such David confesses that he and his sons occupy the throne of Yahweh, so that His kingdom is still called '*the kingdom of Yahweh*' (I Par. xxviii, 5). Because his kingship was in virtue of 'covenant', he was obliged to obey the terms of that covenant. This fact lay at the foundation of a political theory that was unique—the king was subject to a moral law higher than himself, and this law gave certain specific rights to the individual under his government. In this respect the prophets like Nathan and Elias voiced the feelings of every true Israelite when from the beginning of the monarchy to its close they fiercely protested against the exercise of arbitrary authority which disregarded the rights of man.

(c) *The King*. All too clearly do we read of the tragedies that cast their shadow over the Hebrew dynasties. The autocratic Saul was rejected, David was a murderer, Solomon an apostate. With few exceptions the Hebrew kings failed to live up to the nation's high vocation which culminated in their own person. The more men saw the glaring contradictions between the reality and the ideal of kingship, the more did God raise their minds by His prophets to a New David. He would not fail to be the Representative of Yahweh as the image of His goodness and the Representative of the people of God whose priestly vocation to holiness and perfection would receive its fulfilment in the High Priest of all mankind. We can see that great thoughts of salvation and the consummation of God's kingdom gather round the person of the promised theocratic King. Just as the imagination uses the images of memory, yet revises, combines and brightens them with the magic touch of poet or artist, so the prophets under divine guidance used and adapted the elements furnished by David's person, power, and achievements to portray the image of the greatest of the Sons of David. This they did the more readily because of God's irrevocable oath to David linking the Messianic promises with the Davidic dynasty. 'No one', says J. O. Boyd, 'can form a just estimate of the influence which the brief oracle of Nathan (II Sam. vii, 12—16) has had upon the thought of later times, without going through the Old Testament, to say nothing of the New,

with an ear open for the many echoes which this one clear voice has awakened in the souls of hoping, believing men of Israel. All criticism admits the priority and influence.² If we may change the metaphor, we can watch the stream of Messianic promise broaden and deepen as it pursues its way through every region of Hebrew history and see how profoundly it is coloured by the vicissitudes of the monarchy, till it pours itself into the open sea of the New Testament . . . 'He shall sit upon the throne of David his father, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.'

These random jottings may serve as a popular introduction to the greatest inheritance of Israel. However, from earliest times Christian writers like Barnabas,³ Clement⁴ and Justin⁵ remind us that it is an inheritance that now belongs to the Church. Every day in her liturgy she spreads out its riches for our reverence and love. To neglect the Old Testament is to lessen our understanding of him Who is its Perfect Fulfilment.

HUGH MCKAY, O.F.M.

THE LABOUR AND SORROW OF LIFE

A NOTE ON PSALM lxxxix, 10

IN *The Observer* for the 18th May last, Bertrand Russell had an article which he entitled 'The Next Eighty Years'. In the course of it he said: 'My last ten years, according to the Scriptures, ought to have consisted of labour and sorrow, but in fact I have had less of both than in most previous decades'. Readers of the article may be glad of a note on the Scripture reference. This is certainly to Psalm 89 (90), 10, but it is not so clear which version Lord Russell had in mind. The words 'labour and sorrow' occur in all the following Anglican versions: the Prayer Book Version of the Psalms, for which that of the Great Bible was adopted in 1549; the Authorized Version, 1611; the Revised Version, 1881. The same words are used in the Douay Version, 1609-10. Both the first and the second of these versions lend themselves to the interpretation adopted in *The Observer*. The former reads: 'The days of our age are threescore years and ten, and though men be so strong, that they come to fourscore years: yet is their strength then but labour, and sorrow' (copied from the edition of 1663). The A.V. has:

² Cfr. J. O. Boyd, 'Echoes of the Davidic Covenant,' in the *Princeton Theological Review*, 25 (1927), p. 587.

³ Cfr. Barnabas, 2, 7, 10 (ed. Bihlm., II).

⁴ Cfr. I Clem., 19, 1 (ed. Bihlm., 46).

⁵ Cfr. Dialog. 23, 2 (ed. Arch., I, 128).

'The days of our years are threescore years and ten ;
And if by reason of strength they be fourscore years,
Yet is their strength labour and sorrow,
For it is soon cut off and we fly away'.

The R.V. retains the first line of A.V. and proceeds :

'Or even by reason of strength fourscore years ;
Yet is their pride labour and sorrow ;
Yet it is soon gone, and we fly away'.

Here the pride of life as a whole is more naturally suggested, and not pride peculiar to the additional ten years.

The original D.V. has : 'And if in strong ones eighty years : and the more of them, labour and sorrow'. The sense of this has been altered in the current edition, which limits the labour and sorrow to any excess of years over the fourscore :

'But if in the strong they be fourscore years,
And what 's more of them is labour and sorrow.

This is a rendering of the Latin Vulgate, which gives the Gallican Psalter, itself St Jerome's second revision of the Old Latin Psalter. The Latin is 'et amplius eorum labor et dolor'. Such was St Jerome's own understanding of the text. He gives it twice in his writings. In his commentary on Ezechiel, chap. xxvi, he writes : ' . . . octoginta anni ; quidquid supra, labor et dolor est ' ; and in his Epistle no. 34 : ' . . . octoginta : et quidquid superest, labor et dolor est '. The Gallican Psalter, however, is translated from the Septuagint, and there can be little doubt that by the words τὸ πλεῖον αὐτῶν the meaning intended was 'the greater part of them', that is of the years of life. This is in accord with experience—how often in our prayers we refer to this 'vale of tears' !—and also with the tenor of the Psalm.

This reading of the Septuagint has the support of the Aramaic Targum and of the Peshitta. It represents a Hebrew word similar to but different from that of the Hebrew Bible which the R.V. and others render 'pride'. This variation of reading, however, hardly affects the point discussed in this note.

EDMUND F. SUTCLIFFE, S.J.

PENTATEUCHAL CRITICISM IN 'LA BIBLE DE JERUSALEM'¹

IN his special introduction² Fr de Vaux gives a detailed survey of the three main traditions J E and P in the Book of Genesis. This survey (pp. 25-29) is not a mere copy of what literary critics before him determined, referring to the *documents* J E and P. Apart from the difference of *traditions*, the question-marks and shades of expression ('cuni à la tradition', 'traces dans la tradition') show the author's prudence and personal judgement. The classification of the passages justifies the author's opinion considering J and E as two parallel traditions with a common origin (see especially the history of Joseph). The E-tradition is taken as beginning in chapter xx and indeed the reasons for putting it in chapter xv are weak (p. 81, note a). In footnotes throughout the book the author, according to his principles, tries to indicate the primitive origin of a passage, how and in what main-tradition this primitive tradition was taken up, and explains its meaning in the actual context (e.g., Gen. iv, 1-16; vi, 1-4; ix, 20-27). He shows us how the different traditions, especially J and E, often deal with the same subject (e.g. the same theme in Gen. xii, 10-20 J; xx, 1-17 E; xxvi, 1-14 J; parallel traditions on Isaac and Abraham in xxvi, 15-33 J and xxi, 25-33 E J; the same subject in Gen. i, 1-11, 4a P and Gen. ii, 4b-25 J; in Gen. xv J and Gen. xvii P; we find a different explanation of the dispersion of mankind in P x, 32 and in J xi, 1-9). His principles allow him more scope and so he explains chapter xv as the result of two original independent but coherent narratives (p. 81, note a); he attributes chapter xxvii only to J, admitting a development from a primitive tradition (p. 125, note d). Regarding chapter xxxiv we read 'it is a historical remembrance of an unhappy attempt of certain Hebrew groups to gain ground in the region of Sichem, which took place in the time of the Patriarchs', and he refers to Gen. xlix, 5-7 (p. 154f). Many will accept these two points but one would ask for a more detailed explanation on the unity of this narrative.

A point of general interest is the historical character of Genesis (pp. 33-36). Dealing with chapters i-xi, the author refuses all forms of 'concordisme' with the data of our positive sciences on the same subject. The fundamental truths of our Faith are told in a simple and figurative way. These truths are warranted by the authority of Sacred Scripture. 'But these truths are at the same time facts, and if the truths are sure

¹ 'La Genèse', R. de Vaux, O.P., 1951, pp. 221, and 'Le Lévitique', Abbé H. Cazelles, P.S.S., 1951, pp. 133, Les Éditions du Cerf, Paris.

² For the general outline of the book and the author's view on the composition of Genesis, see my article 'Moses and the Pentateuch. A New Approach to an Old Problem', in Scripture, July 1952, p. 60.

then the facts are real' (p. 35). In this way the author explains the historical character of the first chapters.³

In reference to the remaining part of the book, the history of the Patriarchs, the author warns us that these chapters are not to be judged according to the modern rules of the writing of history. They give us a family-history, told in a popular way. But above all it is a religious history and this for two reasons. The direct influence of God is behind all the important events ('This theological conception is certainly correct, but is not the conception of a modern historian, who searches for secondary causes which direct the concatenation of the facts', p. 33), and all the facts are told with the special purpose of supporting a religious thesis: 'One God, one people, one country' (p. 34). In spite of this difference from our modern methods of writing history, these narratives are really historical, for 'they tell in their own way real facts, give us a faithful image of the origin and migration of Israel's ancestors, inform us of their geographical and ethnical relations, and tell of their social, moral and religious behaviour' (p. 34).

The explanatory notes for doctrinal purpose are also interesting. To give only a few examples: the notes on the first three chapters of Genesis, emphasizing the 'religious and eternal teaching' (p. 39, note a; p. 43, note d). Regarding Gen. xviii, 22-32, a note is given; dealing with 'the enormous problem of all times: have the good to suffer with the wicked and because of them?', a short look at the doctrine of collective and individual responsibility (p. 92, note d). The importance of Gen. xxiii and xxxiii, 18-20 is stressed as a first realization of the promise of the possession of Canaan (p. 108, note a; p. 154, note b). Gen. I, 20 and xlv, 5-8 are indicated as the key-texts to understand the meaning of the history of Joseph (p. 166, note a; p. 219, note a; p. 197, note a). On the famous text: 'Tres vidit et unum adoravit', with reference to chapter xviii, the author informs us that this text is given for the first time by St Hilarius with the meaning: Abraham saw three men, he adored One, recognizing the two others as angels (p. 89, note c).

The translation is good and a special effort is made to preserve characteristics of the Hebrew text (e.g. Gen. xlix, 3f., 19). '*asum* (powerful) omitted in verse xviii, 18, is probably a mistake, as the omission of *haqqaton* in xlviii, 19. In xxxvi, 8 'Ainsi Édom s'établit dans la montagne de Séir', M.T. and lxx have Esau instead of Édom. Misprints, I noticed, are: Marc, vii, 10 for Marc x, 4-5 (p. 9); Tradition 'elohiste', xlvii, 1-2, 7-22 for xlviii, 1-2, 7-22 (p. 27). Having read the explanation of Gen. i, 2 as a threefold description of our abstract concept 'nothing',

³ The redaction of the whole paragraph is not so clear. In the beginning the author certainly writes on the first eleven chapters of the book, but soon we get the impression that he is only dealing with the first three chapters in spite of 'these first chapters', and at the end of the paragraph 'the first chapters'.

the reader is disturbed by footnote c page 60; 'C'est le retour au chaos' and by the remark on page 30, 'Tout a été créé par lui (God), même la matière informe, i 1-2'. In footnote b, p. 42, we are told that 'image' include a physical similarity (cf. v, 3) and ii, 8 is added to explain that Hebrews did not always conceive God as incorporeal. But ii, 8 is a text of J, in which we can understand such a primitive conception, but in P such a conception is difficult to admit. Does it go back to an older tradition and if so, did the P-tradition take this expression as having the same meaning?

Further explanations could be asked of other footnotes, but the edition is not meant to be a complete commentary. Yet it is made in such a way, that it makes us ask for more, and I believe that if Fr de Vaux would publish a full commentary on Genesis, even in these expensive times it would certainly be sold! For the time being this edition will undoubtedly be very helpful in offering us many suggestions.

Passing on to the book of Leviticus, people are apt to close this book as soon as possible. It is nothing more than a collection of laws, and who takes delight in reading a code? Yet Abbé H. Cazelles, P.S.S., with his short introduction of fourteen pages and numerous footnotes (about 400), is able to change the reader's mind. Admitting that the chapters xviii-xx form a kind of moral treatise and that chapter xxvi has the character of a prophetic discourse, he stresses that the whole book, according to its substance, is a real ritual: ritual of the feasts (xxiii), ritual of purification (xiv) and of expiation (xvi), ritual of the installation of priests (viii-ix) and ritual of sacrifices (i-vii). Consequently the book has its interest for the study of the history of religions and it also contains many elements especially necessary for a full understanding of the Christian cult and its symbolism. The author therefore places the different religious usages against their appropriate background. Israel, living in Palestine between the two great civilization centres of Mesopotamia and Egypt, owed to its environment many forms of religious life. They inherited from their ancestors, and they borrowed from the Canaanites and via both from prehistoric times; they borrowed from Egyptians and Babylonians and via the latter from the old Sumerians. But having borrowed, they purified the old usages and made them fit to serve in the practice of the religion they had received through Moses. Throughout the book the author tries to indicate the origin of these usages and in the introduction he deals especially with the sacrifices (e.g., p. 23, note e; p. 37, note c; p. 38, note b). Passages of interest for a proper understanding of our liturgy are also indicated. After the analysis of the sacrifices the author applies the different aspects of the levitical sacrifice to the one of the New Testament (pp. 11-14). By this application Abbé Cazelles gives us a good example of biblical theology.

Dealing with the literary composition of the book and the dates

of the different parts, the author recognizes the difficulties of these questions, but at the same time he gives a more or less definite answer. The 'Code of Holiness' is certainly the oldest part and dates from the last phase of the monarchy. It is especially in this part that we find the Mosaic character. Jahve is the Holy-One of Israel. He is the only master of the Israelites and of their country. It was He who brought them out of the land of Egypt. The influence of old Mosaic prescriptions and of the Decalogue can be noticed (v, 20-26, p. 37, note a and xix, 18).

The translation is agreeable to read. One would ask for an explanation of the word 'tête' in v, 7 and xii, 8, which is not in the M.T. The translation of XI, 45 'monter au pays d'Égypte' can hardly be justified. There are some misprints among the references. Noteworthy is the translation of Lev. xviii, 21 'faire passer en *molek*' (p. 89, note b). The author seems to be correct in stating that in this verse the rite probably applies to Jahve.

Other points could be brought forward, but our space is limited. The edition shows the author's acquaintance with the matter, and his familiarity with the texts of the Old Testament. May his publication be a stimulus to increase interest in the Old Testament, the knowledge of which is necessary for a full understanding of the New.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Is there any reference in the Old Testament to the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, or was Christ the first to reveal to us the truth of God being Three-in-One?

There is no clear reference in the Old Testament to this doctrine. Some have seen in the use of the plural in Genesis i, 26 'Let us make man to our image and likeness' a reference to the plurality of persons in God. Others have suggested that the threefold repetition of 'Holy' in Isaiah vi, 3 indicates the Three Persons in God. A more fruitful line of investigation is to examine the passages suggesting the divinity of the Messiah and those which speak of the Wisdom and Spirit of God. There are of course passages in the Old Testament which indicate in a reasonably clear manner that the Messiah to come will be divine. Thus for example, Psalm 109 (110) 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand till I make thy enemies thy footstool'. Jesus sought to show from this text that He was more than human, when He said to the Jews 'If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?' (Matt. xxii, 45). One may quote also Isaiah ix, 6 where the Child to be born is named

Mighty God : but not all are agreed on this interpretation. The Wisdom of God is described at great length in the 'Wisdom literature' of the Old Testament. In the Book of Wisdom, especially, the description is such (cf. chap. vii) that the notion of personality is almost attained. Nevertheless, it is not clear whether we are to identify this Person as the Word of God or the Holy Spirit, though it may best be regarded as a preparation for the doctrine of the Word of God expounded in St John's Gospel. The references to the Spirit of God in the Old Testament are less clear, e.g. 'The spirit of God moved over the waters' (Gen. i, 2); 'The spirit of the Lord came upon him (Saul)'. Nothing could be concluded from such texts as to the personality of the Holy Spirit.

There are of course solid reasons for this obscurity in the Old Testament regarding the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity. The people of Israel were always prone to idolatry as may be seen from their history, and God, through his prophets, was always insisting on his One-ness, as distinct from the multiplicity of gods that distinguished the beliefs of the Gentiles. It took the Israelites all their time, so to speak, to learn this lesson. It would have been utterly beyond their comprehension in their then state of spiritual childhood to have grasped the sublime and profound doctrine of the Trinity. Moreover, the usefulness of this doctrine, if one may so speak, is essentially a Christian usefulness : it is bound up with the whole of Christ's revelation of God become Man and with the life of grace in particular which we owe to the Incarnate Word. Hence it is that Jesus reserves to himself to explain the mystery of the Trinity to men.

R. C. FULLER.

Is not the Catholic practice of calling priests 'Father' contrary to the words of Christ, 'Call none your father on earth', Matt: xxiii, 9?

This passage, like any other should be studied in its context and against the New Testament background. Our Lord is speaking with special reference to the Pharisees. They had so flagrantly abused their position of authority that he felt it necessary to warn the people against them. There was no contemporary custom of calling anyone *living* 'father', but there was a custom of appealing to 'the Fathers' on a point of tradition. The 'Fathers' were prominent authorities now dead who were responsible for much of the Pharisaic tradition, so rigid and set and doing so much harm to the people. Our Lord is denying to these deceased 'Fathers' the authority they had arrogated to themselves and which was still accorded to them by the people. Hence Jesus does not say 'Be not ye called Father', but 'Call none your father'. He is urging the people to stop appealing to them as authorities. Our Lord is therefore speaking of men who had either falsely taken to themselves authority or who had abused such legitimate authority as they may have possessed.

There is no evidence that Jesus is giving a universal command. There are many such commands or exhortations which can only be properly understood in their context. All would agree, for example, that it would be a wrong inference to conclude from this text that one should not call one's own father by that name. Yet this is as logical an inference as the other, if one takes the passage literally apart from its context.

The use of the title 'Father' is very ancient in the Church. It dates back to the beginning of monasticism, for of course the very name 'abbot' means 'father'. In other words the title was in use at a time when religion was in its first fervour and there could be no question of widespread abuse. Indeed what could be more natural than to call one's religious superior 'Father'? Our Lord said that all fatherhood on earth is named after our Father in heaven, just as all authority on earth is delegated by God and is a sharing in his authority. R. C. FULLER.

BOOK REVIEWS

Bellarmino Bagatti, O.F.M.: *Gli Antichi Edifici Sacri di Betlemme (Pubblicazioni dello Studium Biblicum Franciscanum N.9)*. Gerusalemme, Tipografia dei PP. Francescani, 1952. Pp. x, 279, 56 plates and 4 plans. Price not stated.

Our readers are already acquainted with the excellent work of the Franciscan Fathers in publishing detailed accounts of the shrines of the Holy Land. The volume on the monuments of Emmaus-el-Qubeibeh was noticed in Volume III (1948) 23f. and those on the sanctuary of the Visitation and on the discoveries at St John's, both at 'Ain Karim, in IV (1949) 29f. and 64f. The present work follows the same general scheme, full historical notices being followed by archaeological descriptions. A regret may be expressed that, for the former, in many cases references are given only to secondary sources, which is inconvenient for those who do not happen to possess them. The first two chapters deal with the Basilica, the third with the Grotto and its adjuncts, the fourth with the buildings of the Byzantine period around the Basilica, the fifth with the Crusaders' constructions around the same, and the last with the village and neighbourhood. There are 65 illustrations in the text and in addition 119 photographic reproductions in the appendix of plates. There are copious references in the notes to the relevant literature. In a word everything has been done to make the work as useful as possible including the provision of a general index of sixteen columns and a list of biblical quotations. To the latter should be added Micheas v, 2, and Amos viii, 9, p. 67, II Paralipomenon xi, 6, p. 264; and the reference for Psalm cxx, 7 should be p. 268.

The excavations and restorations carried out by the Custody of the Holy Land from 1948 to 1951 have brought new facts to light which are here published for the first time. In the time of David Bethlehem had a gate, II Samuel xxiii, 15, and therefore walls, but of these no trace has so far been found. Nor has anything been found of the fortifications erected by Roboam, II Paralipomenon xi, 6. The well-preserved oil or grape presses discovered in the Shepherds' Field are, however, even more ancient and date from the Bronze Age. The centre of interest at Bethlehem is, of course, the cave in which our Saviour was born. Our first witness that such was His birthplace is a passage of St Justin's *Dialogue with Trypho* written about the middle of the second century by one who was himself a native of Palestine; and Christians throughout the ages have accepted the tradition. It is worthy of remark that in this same passage the Saint says that it was in this cave that 'the Magi from Arabia' found the Child Jesus. Now he could not but be aware that St Matthew, ii, 11, says that their visit took place in an οἶκος, a word which commonly means and is commonly translated 'house', and it is pointed out that the Holy Family would not have remained in the cave-stable after the departure of the crowds who had come for the enrolment. St Justin, however, took a contrary view, considering, perhaps, that poverty prevented the renting of a suitable home for any considerable time. He will have understood the word of 'a dwelling-place' with the wide meaning attaching also to οἶκος which is used in the Septuagint of 'a tent', Genesis xxxi, 33, and in the *Odyssey* ix, 478, of 'a cave'. The opinions of later Fathers are divided on the question. Is it possible that, if St Justin inherited a correct tradition about the cave of the Nativity, he had also reliable information about the scene of the Magi's visit?

The pillar-hermits of Syria are well known; not so those of Bethlehem. And it is interesting to learn that there were two in the early ninth century and one as late as the Crusades. Their names are not preserved. Also unknown to many is the practice of tattooing pilgrims which began in the sixteenth century. The subjects were the Cross with Calvary, the Holy Sepulchre, the name of Jesus, the emblems of the Passion, and the like. The mother-of-pearl industry, on the other hand, is well known. Fr Bagatti gives an illustration of a magnificent work of art executed in honour of the episcopal jubilee of Pope Pius XII.

EDMUND F. SUTCLIFFE, S.J.

Teresa of Avila by Kate O'Brien, Max Parrish. 7s. 6d.

Of books on St Teresa of Avila it might be thought there are enough. Yet the present revival of interest in the saint and her work is a redeeming feature of an age which appears so materialist. In a sense one can never have too much of a good thing if only because in this

case the lesson is hard to learn. Teresa of Avila has exercised a fascination and an influence on mankind difficult to parallel, and some have not hesitated to call her the greatest woman of all time. If this is so it is not because her writings are all easy reading, a great part of them is not for she writes of matters of deep spiritual import. Yet with all her sublimity of teaching she is extremely human and her vivid personality strikes the reader as if he knew her personally. Indeed it is this combination of mysticism and sound common sense which is probably why we want to know more about her as Miss O'Brien pertinently observes, yet we must not think we shall totally comprehend her. She is there to inspire, instruct and lead the way, even if few can hope to imitate her fully.

Miss O'Brien succeeds admirably in penning within the short space of less than one hundred pages a vivid sketch of the saint's character—a burning, yet human personality living a life for God, a woman of warm affections, of outstanding charm, of heroic courage; a leader of men as well as of women; a master of prayer. Yet Miss O'Brien is not uncritical. Teresa's constant excuse 'I am only a woman . . .' when she indulges in vagueness of expression is not allowed by our author, for Teresa was a woman of outstanding intelligence who could be precise when she thought necessary. Similarly her discouragement of learning in her nuns seems exaggerated to Miss O'Brien and she goes on to ask also whether her judgement of men was as sound as her judgement of women; witness the subsequent history of Father Gracian on the other hand. Miss O'Brien rightly points out that Teresa's repeated declaration about her early 'sinful' life must be understood in the light of her later sanctity. There was nothing that we would normally understand as a sinful life. Finally Miss O'Brien, very truly observes that to know her well we should read her letters. This is true of any man and especially of the great. Here we are fortunate in having abundant material at hand. Teresa's letters are available in the new Englis' edition of Prof. E. Allison Peers.

R. C. FULLER.

Les Papes d'Avignon (1305—1378), by G. Mollat. Pp. 597 (Letouzey and Ané, Paris).

It is now forty years since the Abbé Mollat's book was published, and this ninth edition, 'revue, remaniée et augmentée', will ensure that for some time to come it will retain its place as the standard work that it has been since 1912. It is especially in the chapter on the relations between the Papacy and Italy, which has been almost entirely rewritten and considerably lengthened, that this edition differs from its predecessors. The claim put forward in an 'avertissement préliminaire' that the chapters on the relations of the Papacy with the Empire and with England show 'des changements et des développements notables'

is justified in the first instance, but in the case of England there are only changes of minor importance that are dealt with in the space of a few paragraphs.

The Episcopal Colleagues of Archbishop Thomas Becket by David Knowles. Pp. 190 (Cambridge University Press) 12s. 6d.

In this volume, made up of the Ford Lectures, delivered by Professor Knowles at Oxford in 1949, the author does not aim at providing us with a complete account of the whole controversy between Archbishop Thomas and his king, but rather confines himself to throwing light on an aspect of the quarrel that has hitherto received little attention: the collective attitude of that distinguished body of men who were St Thomas's fellow bishops, and the king's spiritual vassals. Inevitably, therefore, were they drawn into this conflict that arose from the problem of how to reconcile feudal discipline with the requirements of canon law.

In the first two chapters will be found a short biographical sketch of each of the fifteen bishops concerned. 'The most enigmatic figure of them all', the archbishop's chief opponent, Gilbert Foliot, Bishop of London, rightly receives fuller treatment than do the others. These men were called on to act as a body both at Clarendon and Northampton in 1164 and again later during the period of St Thomas's exile. The author studies their conduct on these various occasions and comes to the conclusion that they were by no means, as they have been misrepresented, solidly in support of the king. On the other hand, influenced by those principles of post-Gregorian Church Government in which they had been trained, they were not unmindful of their duties to Thomas and to the Pope. It is interesting to see how the ideals of the Gregorian reformers have eventually become effective in the land where the Conqueror and his sons had for long raised a barrier against their penetration.

The value of this work lies not in any further contribution to the already known facts of the controversy, but rather in the excellence of the narrative of the events from 1163 to 1170 in which the actions and attitudes of the bishops receive due consideration.

This book has been excellently produced and maintains the high standard that we associate with works from the Cambridge University Press

N. KELLY.